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SHELVED WITH
PERIODICALS

AUGUST 1983

PLEASE RETURN

ERROR

Montana's primo medical examiner, Dr. John Pfaff in Great Falls, has straightened me out on a wrong piece of information in the last newsletter.

Tests by a few medical examiners in the United States have demonstrated that sawed-off shotguns do not create a wider dispersion of shot. When shortened to eight inches and fired up to distances of eighty feet there was no significant difference in pattern diameter from their original length. Apparently their effectiveness is more intimidating than destructive.

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AUGUST 1983

ON CALL SCHEDULE - MONTANA STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER

275 W. Front Street
Missoula, Montana 59802

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 KEN MUELLER	2 KEN MUELLER	3 KEN MUELLER	4 KEN MUELLER	5 KEN MUELLER	6 KEN MUELLER
7 KEN MUELLER	8	9	10	11	12	13 JOHN PFAFF
14 JOHN PFAFF	15	16	17	18	19	20 RON RIVERS
21 RON RIVERS	22	23	24	25	26	27 RON RIVERS
28 RON RIVERS	29	30	31			

Telephone Numbers: State Office - 728-4970
WATS Line - 243-5796

Home Phone: Dr. Ron Rivers- 728-2033 (Home)
(week nights call unless otherwise indicated)

Dr. John Pfaff - Great Falls
Hospital - 727-3333
Home - 727-3905

Dr. Ken Mueller- Billings
Hospital - 657-7000
Home - 248-3024

EXHUMATIONS
AUGUST 1983
R. L. Rivers, M.D.

"What do you think you'll find, Doc?". An age old question often asked when considering digging somebody up. The answer is always the same.

"I don't know. No matter how long the body has been in the ground there are other conditions to be considered."

As the back-hoe uncovered the cemetary grave, the coroner handed the pathologist the authorization for the exhumation. "Appears to be O.K.", the doctor said as he peeked over his spectacles at the signature. "Glad to see you are all ready to identify the body too. Are we going to take soil samples?"

QUESTIONS:

1) What conditions may affect the preservation of a body?

2) Who may authorize an exhumation?

3) How do you identify an exhumed body?

4) When are soil samples necessary?

EXHUMATIONS
AUGUST 1983
R. L. Rivers, M.D.

ANSWERS:

1. Preservation of the body depends on several factors.

   1) length of interment
   2) integrity of the casket and vault
   3) strength and quality of embalming
   4) presence of insects and bacteria
   5) condition of soil and ground temperature

2. Exhumations may be ordered by the court in either criminal or civil cases. Strong reasons are usually required, particularly if there is an objection by an opposing party.

   The next of kin can authorize an exhumation. These may be done to satisfy insurance disagreements, disputes over the coroner's verdict, or identification.

   Pathologists performing an autopsy must obtain a permit from the court, coroner or family. If a second autopsy by the same pathologist is needed, a new authorization is still required.

3. At the exhumation an individual must be present to identify the body - usually a relative or funeral director. Fingerprints, if possible, dental records and X-rays may be necessary.

   Further, photographs should be taken to document the exhumation and identity of the deceased.

4. If poisoning is suspected, soil from the ground surface, remote area of the cemetary, above, under and either side of the casket should be taken. These samples can determine if poison seeped into the casket.